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ABSTRACT

This conference presentation describes New York State programs serving elderly mentally retarded (MR) and developmentally disabled (DD) persons. These service providers offer programming that is sensitive to the impact of the aging process, or provide the opportunity to access community aging programs, or a combination. Linkages are being developed among 13 aging and DD network groups. Three state offices are involved in the effort: the New York State Office for the Aging, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. The Developmental Disabilities Project began in 1986 to test the feasibility of serving older developmentally disabled persons in congregate settings such as senior centers, nutrition sites, and social adult day care programs. The Project's three phases include studying problems in integrating older developmentally disabled persons into aging network programs and proposing strategies for reducing barriers, implementing a series of demonstrations to test integration strategies, and evaluating the relative effectiveness of the integration strategies and developing a how-to manual. Also described is a state-level Memorandum of Understanding which formalizes coordination and cooperation between the State Aging and MR/DD offices and establishes a model agreement that can be used to guide efforts at the county and regional level. (4 references) (JDD)

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Aging and Disabilities: Partnership or Parallel Paths?

Half-day Intensive, Thursday, April 26, 1990

The Work On Aging/DD in New York State

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"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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Good afternoon. I am very happy to be here today to have the opportunity to tell you about the exciting things going on in New York State with regard to elderly mentally retarded and developmentally disabled persons.

There's alot of work going on all over New York State to develop linkages and foster contact between the fields of Aging and MR/DD. For example we have 13 separate aging and DD network groups going on. There's also a tremendous amount of work being done to provide and plan services and programs that enhance the lives of elderly developmentally disabled persons and that are designed to take into consideration the impact of the aging process.

I am going to describe this work and I'll start by defining the three state offices that are the key players in the effort. Then I'll describe a major project the 3 offices are involved in and tell you how the success of the big project has lead to the funding and development of many other programs. These programs offer meaningful and normalized alternatives to continued participation in day programs which stress goals and habilitation. These programs either provide elderly developmentally disabled persons with programming that is sensitive to the impact of the aging process, or they provide the opportunity to access community aging programs or a combination of both.

Along the way, I hope to give you some idea of the vigor and pleasure and excitement that all of us feel about what we're doing in New York State.

With regard to New Yorkers 60 years and older, the main office at the state level is the New York State Office for the Aging. This office is responsible for planning, funding and coordinating services for older New Yorkers. It supports and monitors a network of 59 county-wide agency offices throughout the state.

With regard to New Yorkers who are mentally retarded and developmentally disabled, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities is the State agency which regulates and provides services. The office has 20 regional offices throughout the state.

The third office, the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council is a planning, funding and coordinating agency. In our state there are 34 council members; half are consumers who are appointed by the Governor and the rest are Commissioners and leaders of State offices. For example, the head of the State Office for the Aging and the head of the State Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities sit on the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. The Council receives federal dollars for the Federal Developmental Disabilities Administration. These dollars are seed money for innovative projects.

For example, 5 years ago the Council gave money to The Dutchess County Cooperative Extension which is an agricultural service provided by the state to assist people in Dutchess County with their agricultural problems. The Extension runs a gardening program to teach residents of Dutchess County about growing fruits and flowers. The DDPC people thought that some of the elderly developmentally disabled persons at the Wassaic developmental center could take advantage of the program and so money was provided for rakes and seeds and instruction. The developmentally disabled seniors came into the program and two years later one of them who was 78 years old at the time, won first prize at the County Fair for his tomatoes.

Three years is the longest time the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council can fund specific Projects because anything beyond 3 years becomes maintenance. Therefore, proposals have to show that after Council funding runs out, they will be picked up in one form or another.

Around 1985 people on the Council chose elderly developmentally disabled persons as an important area to work on. The growth in numbers and increasing longevity had made them a group in need of special attention. The Council's interest was a natural outgrowth of a 1983 New York State Report on this population and a 1985 State Conference which followed in Syracuse, New York. The State Office for the Aging and OMR/DD began
to explore options for future program development for elderly developmentally disabled persons.

This lead to the Developmental Disabilities Project which began in 1986. Its purpose was to test the feasibility of serving developmentally disabled persons in congregate settings such as senior centers, nutrition sites and social adult day care programs. The project was funded by the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and administered by The State Office for the Aging in cooperation with The Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities. Specifically, 70% of the project was funded with Council monies, and a 30% match came from The Aging Office. The Mental Retardation Office was involved because the clients are in their system. The Project has 3 parts or 3 phases. First - to study problems in integrating older developmentally disabled persons into aging network programs and propose strategies for reducing barriers.

Second - the second phase was to implement a series of demonstrations to test integration strategies, and

Third - The Third Phase was to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the integration strategies and develop a how-to manual.

The project has been a huge success. The integration is going on and two important reports have been produced. One is called Barriers and Strategies, which is from Phase One, and the most recent one, for Phase Three, is called The Wit to Win.

In Phase I the first objective was to study the problems and barriers in integrating older developmentally disabled persons with aging programs. Seven barriers were identified:

Policy barriers
Attitudinal barriers
Information/Referral barriers
Financial barriers
Coordination/Administration barriers
Programmatic barriers
Education/Training barriers

The second objective of phase I was to identify strategies to overcome these barriers.

First of all, a list was made of possible strategies to address all the barriers. The strategies are statements of actions that could be undertaken to break down the barriers, for

example, that OMR/DD and The State Office for the Aging could ensure that regulations provide, where possible, individual choice, etc.

These statements are creative and visionary but also concrete, and they provide a springboard for moving forward, specifically into Phase II of the Project.

Phase 2 of the Project involved setting up and evaluating 4 County based demonstration projects. These projects were set up to test the project integration feasibility premise by actually attempting to integrate seniors with developmental disabilities into a variety of community aging programs such as senior center programs, social model adult day care programs, and nutrition programs. Each project was allowed to develop its own integration methodology. The progress of the local demonstrations was carefully monitored and assessed by SOFA.

For example, at the sites evaluation included the reactions of the site-managers and the regular participants of those sites to the idea of having developmentally disabled persons with them.

What did we find?

The four local demonstration projects planned to integrate a total of about 55 seniors. By the end of the project period the total had been exceeded and some 70 mentally retarded seniors had been successfully integrated with 17 local aging program sites.

The four demonstration projects also showed the following results:

It is necessary to lay a foundation for interagency cooperation at the local level.

Integration can be achieved using different methodologies including placing people individually or in small groups.

Personnel and financial resources are needed, and programmatic and policy barriers need to be addressed first.

It is necessary for the State to provide ad hoc technical assistance to facilitate local cooperation.

These results are in this How to Integrate Handbook which also explains the Aging and MR/DD systems, discusses how to network for success, how to get your foot in the door, etc.

This handout tells you how to order it if you might want to and also has a xerox of the Memorandum of Understanding that I'll mention next.

This past January the State Office for the Aging joined with the State office of MR/DD to sign the first State Memorandum of Understanding between a State DD and a State Aging Agency. The Memorandum affirms the State Statutes and Federal Older Americans Act Amendments which recognize the eligibility of older persons with developmental disabilities to participate and receive services in community aging programs. This Memorandum is significant because it formalize the coordination and cooperation which has existed between our State Aging and MR/DD offices, and it establishes a model agreement which can be used to guide efforts at the County and regional level.

At the same time that all this cooperative work has been going on between the Aging, MR/DD offices and the Council, the people over at MR/DD were experimenting with their own demonstration projects, 4 upstate and 2 in New York City. They wanted to provide senior day services without being constrained by the rules and regulations that exist in New York State for services to younger adults. OMR/DD has funded six programs that are based on the social model of adult day care.

The programming is designed to be flexible and sensitive to the aging process of the participants. In their program plans the program directors define the characteristics of senior services and address the fact that they are dealing with senior services. They explain how they are working to prevent and slow down regression. In this way the monitors can accept the more relaxed programming and feel comfortable with the notion of choices or options. The idea is to have a program for elderly handicapped persons in the community that doesn't look any different from any other program for seniors who are not disabled.

Our New York State OMR/DD has also funded and implemented a Senior Companion Project, also the first of its kind in the Country. In the program, non-disabled seniors receive

training for and then a small stipend to do community service. This service includes opportunities to be a companion to and become friends with an elderly developmentally disabled person.

With regard to partnership - we're very busy in New York State working to have people from the aging and MR/DD networks meet each other and get to know each other. For example, in New York City we have a Task Force on Aging and Developmental Disabilities. When we were developing our lecture series, which I have as a handout for you, we decided to hold the lectures in the mornings and follow them with a lunch which people could subscribe to. We've found that people really like the lunch not only because it's a pretty tasty lunch but it's also a chance to see new people in a relaxed way. It brings together policy and planning people with program directors and providers, and people can feel comfortable to pick up the telephone when they know who to ask for and that they'll get a friendly response at the other end.

Our New York City Task Force on Aging/DD is one of the thirteen network groups that I mentioned earlier. Both the State Office for the Aging and OMR/DD are working through these network groups to develop a training agenda for these groups. This will consist of a workshop to discuss what we've learned from the demonstration projects and then follow - up training in the area of aging and developmental disabilities.

Last month the DDPC awarded 7 grants to projects in NYC to promote integration of elderly DD persons and provide linkages between the Aging and MR/DD systems. We have proof that integration can work, and now we'll be seeing what different types of models can work in different types of boroughs.

The DDPC is also funding a video on special training techniques for people in both systems who work with aging developmentally disabled persons. The video is in process of being filmed now. A video which became available last year has been very successful for public education and staff training. The video is called Aging, A Shared Experience, and was

developed and distributed by the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Our own New York City Task Force, which is also DDPC funded, is seeking permanent funding. Next month I and the other co-chair, Sydelle Levy, are going to meet with people from the New York City Office of MR/DD., And we plan to approach representatives from the Aging system as well.

There are also some very special programs that are the result of creative thinking on integration. Two examples that I am familiar with are at Brooklyn Catholic Charities: one where a group of elderly developmentally disabled persons from a MR/DD Day Program at Shields Institute, go with their own staff once a week to the Bayside Senior Center in Queens. There they participate in Center Activities including an exercise class; and another called Senior F.U.N. (Fulfilling Unmet Needs) which is a retirement program for mentally retarded seniors and is located in a senior/shared housing building in Brooklyn.

Next Monday, April 30th, our NYC Dept. for the Aging is sponsoring a training workshop on serving older persons with family members with a disability. Here is the notice if you'd like to look at it.

We've also been very fortunate in New York State because the 3 persons at the state level have made themselves so accessible. They came to local meetings, they work on committees and they're always available for consultation. I know in New York City we feel very grateful for the support of Phil LePore, the project coordinator, at the State Office for the Aging, and Arthur Macginnes, the grant officer at the Developmental Disabilities Council.

In addition to offering guidance, Dr. Matthew Janicki, who is the Director of Aging Services at OMR/DD, is a distinguished author who played an influential part in the 1987 Federal Amendments to the Older Americans Act and the Developmental Disabilities Act. His visionary leadership is an inspiration for all our local aging and MR/DD organizations and we feel very lucky to benefit from his knowledge and strength.

So in summary, I have tried to give you an idea of the scope of the activities that are going on in the area of Aging and Developmental Disabilities in New York State. This has included the leadership roles of the 3 state agencies, the State office for the Aging, the Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. They inspire, guide and support our local efforts. The work also includes the Aging/Developmental Disabilities Demonstration project, the Memorandum of Understanding and the extensive networking process, sort of up and down through the state and local levels and across all over the state. To me it's sort of like a kaleidoscope.

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to tell you about the efforts in New York State to broaden and enrich the lives of elderly New Yorkers with Developmental Disabilities.

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